

Administration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., 2023

Remarks in an Exchange With Reporters in White Plains, New York
May 10, 2023

Public Debt Limit

Q. Could you give us any update from your staffs on the debt limit talks? Have you gotten any update today?

The President. No, I haven't. I haven't gotten any update.

Federal Budget Negotiations

Q. How are you feeling though? Do you feel more optimistic about a deal today than you did yesterday?

The President. Look, the purpose of them meeting together was to lay out what we think the answer is in terms of the budget, what we think we should cut, what we think the revenue should be, and have them lay it out as well and begin a discussion. That's the purpose of the meeting.

Public Debt Limit

Q. Mr. President, is a short-term—is a short-term increase the only option now?

The President. No. No, it's not the only—we still have time to do a whole deal.

Q. Mr. President, what are you looking for out of Friday's meeting?

The President. On Friday?

Q. When you're meeting with the leader again and the——

The President. To find out what our staffs agreed upon and begin further discussion.

Look, the idea that we're going to just not discuss anything consequential is just not real. We have to decide what is—for example, they keep saying they only want—they're going to go back to the 2022 budget. Well, the 2022 budget—in the 2022 budget, what is it that they are going to cut? What are they going to keep? Are—just tell us. Are they going to make sure they continue to fund the Defense Department? Are they not going to cut veterans? Well, if they're not going to do that, what are they going to cut? So we know what we're talking about.

Mexico-U.S. Border/Immigration

Q. Can you expand on what you meant when you said there's going to be "chaos at the border"?

The President. Say that again?

Q. Can you expand on what you meant when you said there will be "chaos at the border"? For how long?

The President. Well, we've had chaos at the border for a number of years. You have to fully fund the border security effort. We have to fully fund——

Look, the purpose of what we're doing now is making legal immigration more streamlined, see illegal immigration shorter term improved, and move in a direction that people know that there's a legal way to get here and not a legal way. That what's underway now.

Immigration Reform

Q. Mr. President, what is the plan B if the asylum rule is blocked in court?

The President. We'll figure that out if it's blocked in court.

President Andrés Manuel López Obrador of Mexico

Q. And is Mexico doing enough, sir? Are they taking enough enforcement action?

The President. Yes, I spent an hour with the President of Mexico yesterday. He's been very cooperative. We're in agreement. And he's also supportive of making sure we have way-stops in Colombia and other countries where people can make their case.

Mexico-U.S. Border/U.S. Border Patrol

Q. Are you considering sending additional troops to the border?

The President. Yes.

Q. How many more?

The President. I told you, we already—1,500 now.

Q. Right.

The President. And it's not—and the troops are there to free up the Border Patrol people to be able to do their jobs.

Look, I asked the Congress for a lot more money for the Border Patrol. They didn't do it. It's made it harder.

So—and that—one of the things I want to know about this negotiation: Are they going to cut more folks out of the Border Patrol? What are they going to do? So I know what I'm going to be dealing with.

Mexico-U.S. Border/Immigration

Q. Governor Abbott said that he wants to see as many as 15,000 or 150,000 troops at the border. So are you thinking about sending more than 1,500?

The President. No, look, what we want to do at the border is have it work and function in the way it's designed to work. And that requires us having more immigration officers, more asylum judges, a whole range of things. More personnel. And I'm trying to do as much of that as I can.

Q. Mr. President, when you said——

The President's Remarks at SUNY Westchester Community College/Representative Michael V. Lawler

Q. Sir, what did you tell Congressman Lawler?

The President. I thanked him for the courtesy of him showing up. I told him this wasn't designed to be anything other than to lay out my position.

We had a very brief discussion about the need for us to be level—not he and I—but with the Republican leadership. He told me he thought that the Speaker was willing to negotiate. I said, "I hope so."

Just basically—what I do—whenever I go into someone else's district, just a matter of courtesy.

Representative George A.D. Santos

Q. Should Congressman Santos be expelled from Congress?

The President. Oh, I—[laughter]. Look, if I comment at all on—on Santos, you're all going to say I'm getting the Justice Department to do things. I'm not commenting on Santos at all.

Q. I meant from Congress. I meant by Congress. Should he be expelled by lawmakers from Congress?

The President. That's for Congress to decide.

Supreme Court Associate Justice Clarence Thomas

Q. Mr. President, Justice—Justice Thomas, should he be impeached?

The President. Oh, I think they're a long way from that. There haven't been the hearings yet.

Q. Would you accept that kind of behavior from your own staff? If one of your staff was accused of the same things that he's been accused of, would you accept that kind of behavior?

The President. No.

Q. Then what makes it acceptable—[inaudible]?

China-U.S. Relations

Q. [Inaudible]—talk to the Chinese President, Xi Jinping? Why has this not happened yet? And what is the progress on making this conversation happen?

The President. There's been progress. It will work out.

Q. When?

Q. Mr. President——

The President. Two-thirty on—well——

The President's Travel Schedule/Public Debt Limit

Q. Mr. President, you said you are—you're likely to delay your trip to the G-7.

The President. No, I didn't say that.

Q. You said——

The President. I didn't say "likely."

Q. ——you're "considering."

The President. I didn't say that either.

Q. What—what——

The President. What I said was——

Q. ——needs to happen?

The President. ——depending on the state of play in the negotiations, it's possible I would either have to delay my trip—not delay—not go and do it virtually, or not go.

Q. Mr. President, what has to happen? Mr. President, what has to happen?

The President. I'll tell you when it happens.

Q. Okay. Okay.

The President. One of the things I didn't know I had to be as President is a fortune teller.
[Laughter]

Immigration Restrictions Under Title 42 of the Public Health Service Act of 1944

Q. Mr. President, when you said yesterday that the border could be chaotic for a while, does that mean you feel your administration was not prepared for the end of title 42 this week?

The President. No, no, no, no. What I was saying is, it takes time to put some of what we want to do in place. For example, opening up consulates in other countries like Colombia and other places. That could make a big difference.

I'll take one more question, and then we're all going to lose our hearing.

Federal Budget Negotiations

Q. Do you agree with Speaker McCarthy that this has to get a deal in principle before the beginning of next week?

The President. I'm not going to make those kinds of judgments. I've been involved in negotiations my whole career. Some negotiations happen at the last second. Some negotiations happen way ahead of time. And—but we'll see.

Thank you.

White House Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre. All right. Thanks, everybody.

Q. Thank you.

Press Secretary Jean-Pierre. Thank you, everybody.

Q. Trump? Do you have anything on the Trump civil case?

Q. Thank you, sir.

Q. The Trump civil case. Do you have anything in response to the civil case?

The President. No.

Press Secretary Jean-Pierre. All right. Thanks, everybody.

The President. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:35 p.m. on the tarmac at the Westchester County Airport prior to boarding Marine One en route to New York City. In his remarks, he referred to Speaker of the House of Representatives Kevin O. McCarthy. A reporter referred to Gov. Gregory W. Abbott of Texas; and former President Donald J. Trump.

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